

This is an official
DHEC Health Advisory

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Interim Immunization Recommendations for Emergency Responders: Hurricane Katrina

Background Information

The following information is directed towards individuals who are planning to assist in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Required immunizations

- Tetanus and diphtheria toxoid (receipt of primary series, and Td booster within 10 years)
- Hepatitis B vaccine series for persons who will be performing direct patient care or otherwise expected to have contact with bodily fluids.

There is no indication for the following vaccines given the anticipated conditions in the region

- **Hepatitis A vaccine** (low probability of exposure, even under these conditions, in U.S.) No transmission from contaminated water has been identified in the U.S. since the 1980's. Hepatitis A outbreaks have not occurred following other hurricanes or floods in other parts of the country, including the devastating hurricanes in Florida last year, and the Midwestern floods of the late 1990's. The Gulf Region has had few hepatitis A cases in recent years, with less than 10 in the past 3 months reported from the New Orleans area. Thus, even though the water and sewage systems are damaged or out of operation in many areas along the Gulf Coast, the risk of a hepatitis A epidemic is extremely low. Vaccine will take at least one to two weeks to provide substantial immunity.
- **Typhoid vaccine** (low probability of exposure, even under these conditions, in U.S.),
- **Cholera vaccine** (low probability of exposure, even under these conditions, in U.S., plus no licensed cholera vaccine available in the U.S.), or
- **Meningococcal vaccine** (no expectation of increased risk of meningococcal disease among emergency responders).
- **Rabies vaccine** series (the full series is required for protection). Persons who are exposed to potentially rabid animals should be evaluated and receive standard post-exposure prophylaxis, as clinically appropriate.

Questions

Questions you may have regarding this information can be referred to the DHEC Immunization Division at the following toll-free number: 1-800-277-4687.

Sources for Additional Information

Can be found at the following Center for Disease Control Websites:

- Hurricane-Related Information for Health Care Professionals
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/hcp.asp>
- After a Hurricane: Key Facts about Infectious Diseases:
www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/infectiousdisease.asp
- Worker Safety During Hurricane Cleanup:
www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/workers.asp

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